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THE COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE IN ASIA

by William Henry Chamberlin

The dramatic confrontation of the Soviet Union and the Western Powers in Berlin should not obscure the significance of the Communist offensive that is going on simultaneously over large areas of Asia. From Dairen to Rangoon the mainland of that continent is now seething with strife and revolt, with Siam as the only oasis of stability.

It would be exaggeration and oversimplification to attribute all this violence of the post-war period in the Orient to Moscow inspiration. Other factors are involved: the coming of age of nationalism in this part of the world; the aftermath of Japanesee propaganda for Pan-Asia; the economic disorder and impoverishment that have followed in the wake of a destructive war, in Asia as in Europe.

But it is obvious that Communists who look to Moscow for inspiration and guidance are playing a leading role in the forces of unrest and disorder. The Chinese Communists long since reduced the authority of the Nationalist Government north of the Yellow River to a few strongly garrisoned cities and stretches of railway line with narrow hinterland corridors. Now these cities are withering on the vine, and falling successively to Communist control.

The leader of the insurgent movement in French Indo-China is Ho Chi-minh, a veteran graduate of Moscow's revolutionary schools. There is unmistakable Communist leadership in the campaign of guerrilla murder and terrorism that has been worrying the British authorities in Malaya. Recent news from Indonesia indicates that what had been largely a struggle between Indonesian nationalists and the Dutch (who have won the support of some of the separate ethnic groups in the archipelago) is becoming a three-cornered struggle, with Indonesian Communists challenging the authority of the republican government. The hand of Communism can be found in many of the political assassinations and mutinies that have marked the troubled course of Burma's existence as an independent State.

How seriously the British Government takes this Communist offensive in Asia may be judged from Foreign Minister Bevin's recent asser-

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tion in the House of Commons that there is a Cominform throughout southeastern Asia, and that the Communists plan to drive the Western Powers out of that region. Bevin added uncompromisingly:

> "Wherever it [Communism] raises its ugly head we shall do our best to stamp it out and use the maximum of our resources to do it."

II

There is a long historical background for Soviet support of revolutionary movements in the Orient. It is true that orthodox Marxism prescribes that Socialist or Communist (the terms were used indiscriminately by Marx) revolutions should come first in highly developed capitalist countries. But Russia's own experience showed that Marx's timetable might be wrong.

When the first Communist drive against the fortress of the European social order was repulsed, in 1919-20, there was a turn to the East in Moscow's revolutionary thinking. A congress of oriental peoples was held in Baku, itself originally a Tartar city, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Two of the most famous Communist agitators of the time, Karl Radek and Gregory Zinoviev, tried to stir up a "holy war" against "white imperialism" and Radek conjured up the memory of the great Asiatic conquerors, Tamerlane and Genghiz Khan.

Subsequently a "university for the toiling East" and a "Sun Yat-sen university" were opened in Moscow. The former institution was mainly designed for making Communist bureaucrats out of promising youths from the extensive oriental territories in the Soviet Union. But the welcome mat was always out for Communist refugees from Japan, Korea, India, and the colonial countries of southeastern Asia. The Sun Yat-sen university, as its name implied, specialized in training Chinese Communists.

There was a mixture of motives in this Soviet support of Asiatic revolutionary movements. There was the pure zeal for spreading the secular gospel according to Marx, Lenin and Stalin. There was the further dogmatic belief that the reluctance of the Western proletariat to respond to the appeal of Moscow is a consequence of its supposedly privileged imperialist position. Take away the sources of raw materials and colonial profit, so runs the argument, and living standards in the West will sink to a point where Communism will make rapid progress in Western Europe.

Finally, support of malcontents in China, Japan and colonial countries was a gambit in the game of power politics, promoted by Moscow in the interest of Russian rather than Communist imperialism.

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These same considerations are operating today, but against a much more favorable background. Except in China, Asiatic Communism was pretty much of a hole-and-corner affair between the two wars.

But the Second World War brought profound changes and revealed the weakness of the colonial system. The sweeping Japanese successes during the six months that followed Pearl Harbor were not entirely a result of Japanese military preparedness and efficiency. Of more than one hundred million people in southeastern Asia, temporarily submerged by the Japanese onrush, only the Filipinos showed any will to fight; and not a few of them "collaborated" more or less willingly. The native populations of the Netherlands Indies, French Indo-China, Malaya and Burma showed no desire to rush to arms against the Japanese. In Burma a fifth column rendered the Japanese considerable service.

The fall of Japan did not bring a reversion to pre-war conditions. New ideas were in the air; a good many machine guns and rifles were in unauthorized hands; the stage was set for a time of turmoil. The British withdrawal from India and Burma gave considerable stimulus to nationalist and Communist ambitions in all southeastern Asia.

The new Dominions of India and Pakistan have settled down to what looks like comparative stability. But Burma has been a prey to fierce factional war and many of its more distinguished statesmen have perished in a series of killings that recall the exploits of Scarface Al Capone. The disturbances in Burma, in which indigenous Communists have played a considerable part, may affect the rice supply of Asia, because this country normally produces a surplus for export.

Chinese Communists in Malaya have inaugurated a hit-and-run murder campaign in that colony, a rich producer of tin and rubber. The victims have been in many cases the British managers of plantations and wealthy Chinese who support the government of Chiang Kai-shek. The situation became serious enough to warrant the dispatch of additional troops and the suspension of legal safeguards. However, no large-scale uprising seems threatened and the terrorism may be subsiding.

A more critical situation has developed in Indo-China and in Indonesia. Efforts of the French Government to reach an agreement with the Indo-Chinese nationalists broke down almost two years ago. This large and colorful land has been in a state of continual guerrilla war ever since. There is a familiar pattern, with the French holding the larger towns and routes of communication while much of the hinterland is in the hands of the insurgents. The strength of this movement is largely in Annam and Tonkin, in the northern part of the colony. Safe

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movement over the highways is possible only in large armed convoys and the cost of the military effort in Indo-China is not the least of the French financial worries.

The recent Communist insurrection against the Indonesian Republican Government in Java is in the orthodox pattern which follows everywhere, from any collaboration with Communism. The Indonesian Communists have now dropped the policy of "united front" with the republican government, set up after the collapse of Japan, against the Dutch.

A stepping up of Communist activity in Java, the most thickly populated and politically active part of the vast Dutch archipelago, followed the return, to that island, of Muso, a leading Indonesian Communist trained in Moscow. A former republican Premier, Sjarifuddin, hitherto known as a Socialist, recently announced his Red affiliation and took his "Socialist" party into the Communist fold.

IV

Apart from a few extreme conservatives, British, French and Dutch colonial experts agree that a new deal for these regions, with much more political autonomy, is essential. The more moderate native nationalists are willing to concede that their countries need the capital and technical experience and, to some extent, the military protection of the metropolitan Powers, at least temporarily.

Theoretically there should be a basis of agreement between the moderates on both sides. Actually, it is difficult to overcome old antagonisms and suspicions. The new nationalist regimes are built on quicksands. They often find it difficult to keep agreements because they do not adequately control their own forces or because the Communists outbid them in extravagant assurances to the masses.

All this creates a made-to-order situation for the world revolutionary strategists in the Kremlin. The Soviet Union cannot bring direct military pressure to bear in southeastern Asia. But a corps of trained oriental agents, developed over the last thirty years, now finds plenty of social dynamite to be exploded in that part of the world. These agents can easily infiltrate the loose nationalist movements and the primitive and inexperienced trade-unions.

Anything that cuts down the flow of tin, rubber and tropical products to the United States, and which reduces the dollar-earning power of colonial areas, is all to the good, from the standpoint of the Kremlin. That is why it has apparently ordered a major offensive in this by no means unimportant sector of the cold war.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events October 20, 1948

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By Frank C. Hanighen

It is no mere piece of historical curiosa that the election campaign of 1948 offers the following parallel with that of 1860: in both years four major parties appealed to the electorate. In 1948, the contenders are: Republican, Democratic, States' Rights and Wallace Progressive. In 1860, it was: Republican, Democratic, Pro-Slavery Democratic, and Constitutional Union. Today, as in 1860, the two lesser parties subtract strength from the Democratic Party. In the year of Lincoln's election, the Pro-Slavery zealots seceded from the Democratic Party and took the states of the Deep South. The Constitutional Union Party attracted the remnants of the Southern Whigs, who might otherwise have joined one or other of the Democratic groups, and got the electoral votes of Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky. The fragmentation of the Democratic Party in 1860 into three sections was followed by 24 lean years before Cleveland reunited the Democratic hosts in 1884. While the eventual survival of the Democratic Party despite its disintegration in 1860 should warn exultant Republicans against preaching premature funeral sermons, this parallel does offer the GOP some hope of a long tenure of power.

That is one way of reading party history. The year 1912, however, presents an opportunity for a very different analysis. In that year, four major parties (Republican, Bull Moose, Democratic and Socialist) were seeking the mandate, and a party which had been out of power for 16 years won because of a split in the ranks of the other principal party. Stated this way, a comparison between 1912 and 1948 cannot improve the mental health of Republicans. It is true, of course, that the division in the GOP ranks was not as serious as that in the Democratic Party in 1860. But many Democrats in 1912 felt confident that a long residence in the Holy Land of office should follow the Egyptian exile of 16 years. The Republicans, however, closed ranks and re-united so effectively that they missed victory four years later by the narrow margin of one state (which Hughes lost through a political accident). Then came the landslide of 1920. If, four years hence, the Democrats find the right leader and a persuasive case, they may confront the GOP with a real threat.

In the realm of political ideas, the four-way fight this year also offers food for speculation. If one classifies the Republican Party this year as "conservative" and the Democratic as "radical" or "socialist", the scores of the two other parties may provide an index of the ideological trend of the day. The States' Rights Party, whatever its traditional attachment to the Democrats, certainly is more "conservative" than the Republicans; and the Wallace-Progressive Party is certainly more "radical" and "socialistic" than the Democratic Party. It will be interesting to see how many popular votes these two extreme wings attract to their flaming banners. One may well compare the vote for Wallace on November 2 with the vote in 1912 for Debs. In that year, the Socialist Party candidate obtained nearly 900,000 votes, or about 6 per cent of the total vote cast. Pre-election estimates today forecast only 2,000,000 votes, or about 4 per cent of the estimated total, for the ultra-socialistic Wallace. All things considered, the results of the four-party struggle this year, taken in the ideological frame of reference, should command more thoughtful attention and more prayerful thought than the bare scores of the Republican-Democratic contest.

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The public opinion polls seriously underestimate the strength of the States' Rights ticket, according to Washington observers who know the South. The latter emphasize the importance of the "silent vote" and the "silent non-voter". A cur-

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rent story in the Capital concerns a local newspaperman of Southern origin, who recently paid a visit to his family in North Carolina. For the first time, the father refused to answer the son's query, "How are you going to vote?" The son suspects that his parents will quietly cast their ballots for Thurmond. In other cases, he believes that Truman-hating voters will not go to the polls, or if they do will scratch the Presidential ballot. This newspaperman concludes that the States' Rights vote in North Carolina will be so large that Dewey will win. Other observers believe that Virginia and Florida will go to Dewey and that there are very good chances for Dewey taking Tennessee and Kentucky. In Tennessee, Boss Crump's influence in favor of Thurmond offers a big threat to the regular Democratic ticket. In Kentucky, former Senator "Happy" Chandler is reported to be quietly but effectively helping the States' Rights candidates.

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Briefs ---- Very soundly, Washington observers are scrutinizing those states where the crucial Senatorial contests are being waged. But, very prudently, they withhold any specific predictions. Senators Ball and Revercomb, it is agreed, seem the weakest contenders. But few will venture to comment positively on the rest of the GOP Senatorial candidates in critical states. However, old hands at the game of doping out general elections hazard a guess that a Dewey sweep will prove strong enough to ensure a Republican Senate majority. It is noteworthy that such a seasoned political reporter as Frank Kent (himself a Democrat) of the Baltimore Sun believes that this will be the outcome.

---- Washington laughs over a hasty somersault executed by Democratic Headquarters recently. The plan of Senator McGrath to assess party members for another $100-a-plate dinner has been cancelled. The plan was to hold a banquet on October 25 in the Mayflower, under the auspices of the Truman-Barkley Clubs. Each diner was to pay $100 for a dinner actually costing only $7. The balance would bolster the meager Democratic campaign fund. The official reason for cancellation was that both Truman and Barkley found it impossible to be in Washington on October 25. Real reason: party followers lodged a mass protest against payment of a second $100 assessment in one year; the pain of the $100 Jackson Day dinner last winter still lingered.

---- On September 22, this column drew attention to the fact that the Republican high command frowned on party literature critical of the late FDR. At the time, a Republican pamphlet entitled "Veterans' Case Against the Democrat-New Deal", containing a decidedly unkind treatment of Roosevelt, had been allowed to go out of print. We drew the conclusion that the Republican National Committee had bowed to the high command's policy by failing to reprint. We were mistaken. This interesting pamphlet is now available in quantity. But -- on the back cover, where formerly the Party appeared as sponsor, there is a blank space. No one can say that the Committee does not know how to compromise.

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In Washington, it is believed that anti-Administration sentiment among veterans is a powerful factor in the rout of the Truman forces. For a time last summer, White House propaganda managed to direct some of the veterans' discontent against the 80th Republican Congress. But, since Members of Congress have returned to their constituencies, they have succeeded in explaining their role in helping veterans. As is natural, this group of voters like many other groups in an election year places responsibility for errors and unsound policy on the Executive. One piece of evidence of this veterans' situation has been noted here -- the resolutions of the recent (1948) Encampment of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW

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attacked the "wasteful extravagance and the largely inefficient organization of the Veterans Administration over the past two and a half years".

This veterans' organization showed an intelligent recognition of what the cost of bureaucracy means and urges eliminating useless forms, charts, bureaus, fees, press sections, non-functioning administrative offices. All these entail enormous expenditures which are charged against veterans' benefits. "Be it Resolved", said the VFW resolution, "to call upon responsible Federal officials for an immediate reorganization of the Veterans Administration, the abolishment of Branch Offices as now constituted, and the utilization of part of the funds saved in the elimination of Branch Offices to provide needed personnel in the operating services of the Regional Offices". Finally, the VFW demands an immediate investigation of the VA failure to provide hospitals despite the Congressional appropriation of more than a billion dollars for this purpose.

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Isn't It Odd Department. Certain Washington reporters have turned their great sleuthing talents, not to the exposure of fifth columnists in the Government, but to smearing two committee chairmen on Capitol Hill. Who are these Members of Congress? They are Senator Homer Ferguson and Congressman J. Parnell Thomas. These twain, oddly enough, head the two committees which have been trying to uncover the Red network in Government ranks.

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Those who have talked recently with Governor Dewey's foreign policy advisers say that dismantling of German industries will stop permanently on January 21, 1949, the day after inauguration. This may prove an overly optimistic estimate, but those who make it insist that a Dewey Administration would effectively crack down on British and French exponents of the wasteful policy of plant reparations. In this connection, the tale of Mr. Paul Hoffman's recent travels is instructive. The ECA Administrator flew to Europe last week to "sell" Bevin and Schumann on a radical reduction and postponement of scheduled dismantling of German plants. Within a few days, he returned to Washington with little to show, save an agreement for a postponement of dismantling and creation of a new committee. The committee will enter Germany (with the kind permission of the British) to examine the dismantlement situation and then to report to Hoffman.

Prompting the Hoffman trip was not only the complaint of General Clay (see NMG, September 1) but also the recommendations of the ECA steel committee, headed by Mr. Wolf of the U. S. Steel Corporation, which had visited Germany and reported. Wolf, it is said, had impressed on Hoffman the absolute necessity of halting dismantlement of the steel industry; and of obtaining for the Ruhr steel plants the necessary iron ore from Sweden and Lorraine. Mr. Wolf, it is said, was especially anxious to save one key plant, which makes transformer steel, the only important source of this material on the Continent. The British propose to dismantle the plant, ship it to England. Two years would be necessary to take it down, transport it to England and get it in production. The European electrical industry, it was explained, could not afford this gap in production of transformer steel. If Hoffman was impressed by such arguments, he failed to reveal it in public. However, the Administrator did come out four-square against dismantling factories which produce cuckoo clocks.

Despite advice from private business, ECA has never tried to crack down on British and French obstructionists. Some advisers reportedly proposed that Hoffman threaten to withhold ECA funds from Britain and France until dismantlement in Germany was halted. ECA, it is said, refused on the grounds that such a move would be "contrary to Administration policy".

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Book Events

The Whole of Their Lives: Communism in America, by Benjamin Gitlow. New York: Scribners. $3.50. Reviewed by John Chamberlain.

Benjamin Gitlow's The Whole of Their Lives is a history of the American Communist movement told in terms of its personal leadership. The book is highly informative and should be made "must" reading for the members of the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities. It is also a disgusting book, quite literally so, for it deals unsparingly with some of the worst human depravity that has afflicted the globe within the written memory of man. What Ben Gitlow has done is to set forth a chronicle of calculated immorality that makes Bluebeard seem like a rather noble character by contrast. Nor is it all a matter of the corruption of Communism by the growth of "Stalinism", for, as Mr. Gitlow shows, the conscious use of lies, theft, slander, character assassination and false witness goes back to Lenin, who taught the early masters of American Communism well.

Some of the earlier U.S. Communists were, of course, individuals who had high standards of personal honor. John Reed, who died of shame when he discovered he had been taken in by Lenin, was no liar. But people like Reed were never permitted to rise to the top in Communist circles; they were used when it was valuable for the party to hide behind a screen of "integrity", then they were ruthlessly brushed aside. The more typical American Communist was Bob Minor, who, according to Gitlow, "drove the soul out of the Communists and in its place substituted objectivity". By "objectivity" Gitlow means the calculated use of any tactic designed to further the cause of Communism. Minor himself paraded as an anarchist critic of Bolshevism when it was to Lenin's advantage to belittle the revolutionary potential of Russian Communists in the eyes of American business men. Later on, when it was important for Minor to appear as a fiery advocate of proletarian dictatorship, the "anarchist" shuffled off his disguise as easily as a bird moults its feathers.

The most horrifying chapter in Gitlow's book is the one called "Liquidation". Here, for the first time to my knowledge, the story of the murder of Juliet Stuart Poyntz is set forth in full detail. Juliet Poyntz was an attractive, college-bred American girl who had "disappeared" from the above-ground ranks of the Communist Party to work for the OGPU. A trip to Russia, where she witnessed the purge in full swing, knocked the romance out of Communism for her. But her comrades wouldn't allow her to withdraw quietly from OGPU activity. When she tried, they sent a decoy, an ex-lover who called her up to talk about "old times", to lure her into Central Park. There she was grabbed and thrown into a car while the ex-lover looked on. She was taken to Dutchess County, murdered and buried in a deep gulley. The police have never solved the mystery satisfactorily, nor have they solved the mystery of anarchist Carlo Tresca's death. But Gitlow does much to clear up both "liquidations". He also tells the full story of the assassination of Leon Trotsky. After reading the chapter on "Liquidation", one realizes just what dizzy standards of personal heroism people like Whittaker Chambers had to reach to dare an open break with their Communist past.

Despite the advice of the late Phineas T. Barnum, Americans like to give everyone, including suckers, an even break. The impulse is commendable. But just what is one to do with a political sect whose motto is: "Never give a bourgeois an even break"? Mr. Gitlow leaves one with a feeling that the honorable man can have no defense against Communists short of complete and open labelling of every Communist Party member and fellow traveller in the U.S. If this means more "Red-baiting", then we'll have to have it.

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European Supplement *to* Human Events

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By Bertrand de Jouvenel

Classical accounts of great battles all begin, very properly, with the weather: for in the hours of fearful suspense the mind is irradiated through all its powers and our consciousness of Nature's impact becomes unusually acute.

Perhaps it is some such feeling that has heightened our delight in this golden autumn. Emerging for a little from what Mr. Churchill has just called their "cockpit", the UN delegates are seen to gaze in rapture now on a sky of the palest and most delicate blue and now on the family groups taking their ease among the autumnal splendors of the champ de Mars. At Llandudno in North Wales, British Conservatives, fresh from their incomparable leader's grave warning, lingered awhile on the pier for a last look at the quiet sea, dappled by the shadows of faint clouds.

A new feeling has come over Europe: more than a foreboding, it resembles rather a prickle in the skin -- a physical awareness, almost, of the hovering nearness of war.

Even as a man who has for some long time been turning uneasily in his sleep awakes at last to find the reason, so has the public of Europe been wakened by Mr. Churchill from its slumbers to an awareness of the cause of its anxiety.

Not only do we fear war but we go in awe of the thought that it is with us, the West, that the decision rests. The tragedy of our time is that there have been evolved in it methods of conquest short of war: to withstand them requires, sooner or later, positive action by the peaceful nations. Let us not forget that, in 1939, England and France had not been attacked but took the initiative themselves. But the feeling is strong that forceful reaction, to be justified, must be preceded by the disregard of the imperialist Power for some landmark which it has been formally warned not to remove. The removal of the landmark is, admittedly, the occasion rather than the essential cause of the initiative: the cause is the inclusion of the imperialist Power in the category of "aggressors by nature". When once experience has brought home to us that it is of the continuing essence of a Power in being, whether Nazi Germany or Stalinian Russia, to proceed from conquest to conquest, then we know that, sooner or later, we must beat that Power back, and the only question still open is "When?"

* * *

What gave Mr. Churchill's speech its importance were the following three propositions therein: (1) Stalinian Russia is in the category of "aggressors by nature"; (2) no friendly settlement will ever be possible with a Power whose basic philosophy impels it to the destruction of other political Societies that differ from itself; (3) the effect of delay can only be to change the balance of forces to the aggressor Power's advantage, by placing in its hand a weapon which today the United States alone possesses. Though Mr. Churchill is much too experienced a statesman to push his reasoning to its logical conclusion in a public speech, he left no doubt in the minds either of his hearers or of the British public generally that by "bringing matters to a head" he meant an ultimatum now.

The prospect appalls many, but there are few in England now who would deny Mr. Churchill's premises: it is true that the policy of "creeping" conquest continues and seemingly must continue so long as Russia holds to her present philosophy; it is true that the threat of the atom bomb, which now sobers her, will lose its virtue when Russia, as in time she must, has got the same weapon. And grave indeed would be the responsibility of today's statesmen before History, were war in its

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most devastating forms to start up in a few years time! Would not their names be cursed by the survivors, as those of men who had destroyed their own commonwealth from failure to act in time?

The thought is an arresting one. In Washington last winter, an American journalist spoke to me in stringent terms of a former French Prime Minister. When I asked him the reasons for his severity, he replied: "Because he could have stopped Germany when France still had superior strength, and so avoided all this."

* * *

The French have many worries, but the great moral issues are not among them. Not for them is the question "Should we act now?" Let more powerful nations answer it. The Americans may say to themselves: "If we have this trial of strength now, our land will be spared the devastation which must ensue if we have it later." The French do not say it, for, whenever it happens, the trial spells disaster for my country. Others may have an interest in facing the ordeal soon; the interest of the French is in living a little longer, which means postponement. The wishes and hopes of France are with the West, but, however advisable a strong policy may be, she cannot but be chary of backing it. For no guarantee has been given her -- probably none can be -- that the forces of the West in combination will hold a solid defensive line on her eastern frontier -- or beyond that frontier, on the Rhine and Elbe. The reverse is now the case: there are, as the French can see, only minute American forces in Germany. The English tell them that this time an expeditionary force will not venture on the Continent. Paris hears discussion of a line of defense on the Pyrenees -- and the French must needs conclude that for them as a member of the Western alliance, war means abandonment to Russian occupation. Thinking thus, many can now see what folly it was to destroy Germany and how necessary is her reconstruction. But others there are who dream dreams of a neutrality to be assured, as they think, by a Popular Front government. Such is the talk.

The French internal situation is well understood: the Queuille government fights on two fronts, against the Communists and against the Gaullists. It has in the Chamber a clear majority over all its foes, but in the country, as surveys of public opinion show, the parties allied in the Government would get today only a third of the votes: the Communists would get a little more than a third and the Guallists a little less. The only hope of a government so placed is a bold and efficient policy which would win back at once many now drifting to extreme courses. But the divisions between the four parties which compose the Government make such a policy impossible. When anything important comes up, Cabinet meetings have to be adjourned while the several groups hold their private deliberations. They all go into a huddle and return, the Socialists especially, with particular demands which they blackmail the rest into accepting.

We have here, then, a particularly weak government having to run a State which has been largely socialized: and as among its many new functions the Fourth Republic has included that of controlling wages, it has to wage desperate struggles with Union demands -- struggles which hold up the life of the nation and threaten to sweep away the regime.

The weakness of the public authority is now so great that what may be called the "hour of Hobbes" seems to have struck: in other words, the time has come when the need seems to be for any authority capable of having the last word effectively, whatever that last word proves to be. As the hostility to de Gaulle has been much increased in political circles by, among other things, the deplorable happenings at Grenoble, growing consideration is being given to the alternative to him -- having the Communists back in the Government. The Communists are, of course, the prime movers in the strikes. Their role, were they in the Government, would, it is felt, be a different one, and they themselves do not fail to stress how they pacified the workers when they were in office.

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Their presence in office is also, they say, indispensable to the defense of the Republic against any would-be dictator -- those with a knowledge of Bolshevik history point to the precedent of the Kornilov affair in 1917. General Kornilov's threat was then used by Lenin to insert the Communists into the Kerensky government, which they were soon able to destroy.

Lastly, a France in which the Communists shared in the Government, though she might find herself deprived of Marshall aid, might also, it is claimed, stand neutral in a world conflict. These are the reasons advanced for a Popular Front; among names mentioned as possible heads of such a government are those of M. Herriot and even of M. Auriol, who might, some think, be tempted to stand down from the Presidency of the Republic.

These are the merest rumors, interesting only as showing the way some of the wind is blowing. They originate mainly in Communist, but partly in Socialist, quarters: there are many Socialists who hanker after the "auld alliance" with their Communist brethren.

* * *

Communist progress in Britain was the subject of a short debate at the Conservative Party Conference at Llandudno. There was an excellent speech from Mr. Henry Strauss, M. P. who, at the time of Yalta, was the only Minister to resign because of the agreements reached at that place of ill omen. The other speeches, his excepted, were proof to me that Communism was but little understood by those who spoke and heard.

It is a view widely held throughout the English-speaking world that Communism is the child of poverty by frustration, and that its progress can be checked only if the workers receive a fair reward and are treated with proper respect. This reading of Communism is quite erroneous and leads its holders to underestimate their opponent dangerously.

What lends it color are the rapid gains made by Communism among the poorer classes in times of economic instability. But similar circumstances bring similar gains to Fascism, which has up to now proved quicker off the mark. The truth is merely that, in unstable conditions, any political movement gains adherents which makes Messianic promises of any sort. But the hard core of the Communist Party is not recruited from these economic victims. True Communism is not bred in despair or spite: rather it is rationality gone mad. Nor, as is so often said, is it a soulless doctrine. Were it the materialistic thing which both its friends and foes claim it to be, it could never have proved such a breeding-ground of fanatics.

Nobody claims, in the case of Socialism, that it is born of poverty and discontent. The Socialist, as is well understood, is a man who has weighed in the balance Society as it is, found it wanting and feels that he has the secret of improving it. If only private property were abolished, man could not lord it over man, and with the passing of the domineering spirit would go the resentment stirred by it. Why, even the State, that vast complex of force and constraint, could then be dissolved! For coercion would be unnecessary when unnatural institutions had to be upheld no longer. Such, in outline, is the Socialist creed: it is an idealist creed.

The Communist creed is exactly the same, and Marx is the prophet in common of both Communism and Socialism -- so much so that the British Socialist Party, though one of the mildest Socialist parties on earth, recently issued from its headquarters as an official publication -- the Communist Manifesto.

As to ends there is absolutely no difference between Socialists and Communists, and I cannot understand how so obvious a truth has fallen by the way. The only difference is as to means. The Communist is a Socialist who has been convinced by

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Lenin's teaching that the end justifies the means. A Socialist is not convinced of this, and feels that immediate tyranny is too high a price to pay for ultimate fraternity: his may be the most gentle of souls and his choice of means may lack nothing of scruple. Of such are Leon Blum and Norman Thomas.

Such being the difference, it is palpably absurd to ascribe the rise of Communism to poverty, when it and Socialism are both responses to the same urge -- the wish to remold Society in a way which, if it were workable, could be considered laudable. Clear also is it that, in this harsh century of ours, Communism must gain at the expense of a Socialism which seems to the young futile and unready. Let us get on with whatever we want done! To arrest the progress of Communism, what must be fought is not so much poverty as intellectual superstition.

I do not underestimate the resistance offered to Communism by Socialists, who have at times given a good account of themselves, though at others they have been, as Mr. Strauss called them, "the door-openers at first and at last the door-mat". Their fight is somewhat like that of the Catholics against the Jesuits, at the time when that order, regarding itself as an army, thought all means justified by the saintliness of its ends. For centuries their principles made their presence intolerable, notwithstanding their many virtues and their vast services to those most Catholic kingdoms, Spain, France and Portugal.

From this analysis it follows that Socialists can never be whole-hearted allies in the fight against Communism. The limit of their help will be to restrain the Communists from their more violent courses. But this is only a passive sort of defense, and the real necessity is that of preserving and ensuring the functioning of a free Society as the alternative to a Socialist Society. A Socialist helping actively in this would be betraying his faith. He does not seek, like the Communist, the brutal overthrow of free Societies, but he would change them bit by bit into the Society of his dreams -- and, in doing so, destroy the conditions on which the present Society exists, break its springs, sap its vitality, undermine its foundations. He can do no other.

Your Socialist, therefore, though he sometimes bears a brave part against Communism, is also preparing the conditions in which Communism will in the end win. He boosts the strength of the ideas which are the stuff of the Communist creed, and weakens the body politic's resistance to it.

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Late notes. In Paris, talk of a government including the Communists has somewhat subsided since M. Moch, the Socialist Minister of the Interior, has returned from North Africa. A man of learning and energy, this trusted friend of M. Leon Blum has apparently succeeded in sobering lesser minds, who were being driven to hysterical action by the fear of Party disintegration. Several local sections or departmental federations of the Party have recently decided to work on their plane with their Communist counterparts against headquarters decision, while no less than four different revolts have occurred at national level: they present a disorderly picture: the Democratic Revolutionary Rally claims to remain within the Party while fighting the government in which the Party participates. The Party of Socialist Unity has broken away and frankly advocates fusion with the Communists, even as its German namesake. Another group has also seceded, mainly composed of overseas deputies, enraged by the verdicts given in Madagascar. Lastly there is the group of the so-called Socialist Struggle which had formerly gone out of the Party. All this gives the impression of dismemberment. But in fact only a small number of uninfluential people are involved and it does not take much acumen to recognize the pattern of Communist intimidation. The Socialist Party conference at the end of October will show the relative strength of the various tendencies.

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